

Improving air quality is critical to our quality of life and the health of our children. That's why I worked at the state level to establish the San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District and why I continue to fight for programs that support cleaner air and our Valley economy.

In June of 2008, a Senate version of legislation I authored (H.R. 3754) to improve Valley air quality was signed into law. This bill helped maintain a dedicated source of funding for diesel emission reduction projects, including retrofitting existing diesel engines with current emission control technology. Retrofitting older equipment is one of the most cost-effective strategies for achieving tangible and immediate air quality benefits.

To build on our progress in the 111th Congress, I joined with other members of the Valley's Congressional delegation in introducing legislation (H.R. 5296) that would allow Valley counties to seek designations as "Air and Health Quality Empowerment Zones." Obtaining this status would help Valley communities receive additional funds to help residents voluntarily replace or retrofit old engines.

Along with our legislative efforts, \$6 million in Recovery Act funding was awarded to the San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District to make diesel retrofits on school buses and agricultural equipment. Through the 2008 Farm Bill, which I helped author, the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) provided \$13 million to farmers to retire old inefficient engines. I also worked with the USDA to provide \$10 million for Valley farmers and ranchers to upgrade their tractors and farm equipment.

Programs like these are a double win for our Valley. They contribute to improving our air quality while also supporting our farmers and vital Valley industries.